

*Anglia*

526

# A Comparative Sketch

O F

## ENGLAND AND ITALY,

WITH DISQUISITIONS

### ON NATIONAL ADVANTAGES,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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*Strenua nos exercet inertia: navibus atque  
Quadrigis petimus bene vivere. Quod petis, hic est;  
Est Ulubris, animus si te non deficit æquus.* HOR.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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**A**MIDST the variety of productions, which have appeared relative to ITALY, the AUTHOR has seen none within his present design. They have been generally descriptive of *striking objects*, and oc-  
cur-

*cunning circumstances*, without going further.

This has induced him to disclose *some* ideas, which (however intimate to other minds) are not, as far as he knows, hitherto committed to paper.

By considering these little volumes worthy of public attention, he may over-rate their value ; but he will not court favour by *prefatory humility*,



*mility*, an attire so frequently used by VANITY in *Masquerade*.

The Press, though a PROLIFIC PARENT *herself*, brings forth an abundance of *barren children*; and if these were of the number, they would only join a large preceding party.

Readers, who are  
 “ Proud to find Fault, and ’raptur’d with  
 Defect,”

may

may, probably, meet with amusement in this *Sketch*.—The Author however, in justice to himself, confesses, that HE is not ambitious to entertain that description of persons. To those who are candid and liberal, he alone appeals; without deprecating or defying critical investigation.

# ERRATA

## *In the FIRST VOLUME.*

Page 2 line 9—for *extention*, read *extension*.

5 l. 3—for *vigourous*, read *vigorous*.

16 l. 6—for *unlimited*, read *unlimited*.

24 l. 10—for *tbwart'd*, read *tbwarted*.

56 l. 5—for *tho'* read *thro'*.

94 l. 15—dele *the*.

A COM-

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## A Comparative Sketch, &c.

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THE human mind, *in contemplating effects*, naturally *seeks for causes*. It would be scarcely possible, in an intelligent being, to disconnect the one from the other ; and the association of our ideas is so rapid, and so involuntary, that whether our sensations be pleasant or unpleasant, we

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are

2      A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

are led, irresistibly, to satisfy this active principle of our intellect. Hence, the pain of ignorance to mankind is more or less, upon every occasion, in proportion as they have accustomed themselves to encourage the extension, and application of this original impulse to their various pursuits of life ; and principally from this, result the many improvements of all arts and sciences, which have, in so conspicuous a manner, contributed to make GREAT-BRITAIN the glory of its inhabitants, and the admiration of foreigners.

There

There are, however, certain limitations to it, beyond which, by the intention of Providence, we are not permitted to explore without being in an endless labyrinth of doubts and difficulties. In confirmation of this, we may quote the absurd *reveries* of many hypothetical philosophers, who are eminent instances of arrogance, folly, and disappointment; and, (tho' they seem destined only as examples to guard us against a vague and presumptuous method of reasoning) yet, by indiscriminating people, they are frequently alledged, as proofs of the

4 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

inefficacy of metaphysical researches towards the attainment of knowledge.

It is not to be doubted, but that those, whose practice and inclination are opposite to study, will draw a general conclusion from a partial misapplication of talents; and we must acknowledge, that many fall victims to their intemperate vanity, in endeavouring to pass the boundaries of their intellectual *horizon*. Many men of this class are natives of ENGLAND, and perhaps the island of GREAT-BRITAIN has produced more of them than



than all the Continent of EUROPE : but, it is evident, that the exertions of a vigorous mind, even when unfortunately misapplied, are, if erroneous, generally harmless ; and that by comparing the conjectures of many systematic writers (however discordant in themselves) we eventually approach truth. We may, therefore, in a principal degree ascribe our national eminence to the freedom of the press, and the general and rapid circulation of newspapers through the island. This is an admirable incentive to read ; it insensibly habituates



## 6 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

mankind to reflexion, and enlarges the sphere of the mind.

The Italians, for want of these advantages, are wonderfully defective in information. Nature is every where equally beneficent, and the human species is certainly as capable of improvement in ITALY as in ENGLAND; but the slavish policy of the Romish Church has so cramped the ideas of these people, that, amidst the occasional irradiations of the strongest natural understandings, we cannot help noticing the most incredible ignorance. From their disuse of,  
and

and consequent dislike to reflexion, their libraries are filled with paintings; and all the inhabitants, without exception, follow the Corso, the Gaming-Table, and the Opera.

The passion for gaming is there so very common, that it is scarcely possible to pass the streets of GENOA, NAPLES, or of any other great city, without seeing numbers of their very lowest rabble always playing cards in them.

It would be reasonable to suppose, as the laws of that country make no  
pro-

8 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

provision for its poor, that necessity alone would oblige these to be industrious: but the absolute reverse is the fact; and excessive laziness is their characteristic. The innumerable convents, which support thousands, and thousands of beggars, from a mistaken principle of charity, are themselves the cause (by being the encouragement) of that poverty and misery, which every individual must remark in his tour through ITALY. In considering its absolute and relative prosperity, we cannot help reflecting on the evident disadvantage of this pervading indolence, and on the immense

foolish + excessive opinions on Italy!

menſe treaſures buried uſeſſy in their Churches ; but without giving ourſelves much trouble to trace the *remote* ſources of this miſfortune, we unavoidably obſerve the deplorable influence, which the celebration of ſo many feſtivals and ſaints'-days has on agriculture and commerce. Poſſibly the morals of the people are not ſo much endangered by it, as they would be in northern climates, for in that part of the world, the circumſtance of a drunken populace would be almoſt ſufficiently remarkable to find a place in the national Chronology. Here, however, a general inference

ference follows, that in those countries subject to the Hierarchy of ROME the loss of labour must be singularly detrimental to society.

In speaking of ITALY, the science of Music almost necessarily occurs. An intuitive and beautiful melody, joined to a consummate knowledge of instrumental harmony, in its various susceptibility of accompaniment to the human voice, and a liquid language must enrapture every human being, whose soul is accessible through the senses. Notwithstanding the turgid declamation of the serious, and  
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the low jargon of the Comic Opera, all EUROPE supports them; nor shall we continue to wonder at the paucity of their good dramatic pieces, (considering the eminent poets ITALY has produced) if we, on the other hand, have noticed how those of the elegant METASTASIO have been mutilated, and massacred, according to the caprice of the composer; and how barbarously they have been sacrificed to the conveniency of his *adagio* or *allegro*! But the truth is, that the musicians of ITALY care little about the poetry they set.

As



As a proof of it, let us take a view of the words and sentiments of the most beautiful vocal music of SACCHINI, GUGLIELMI, CIMAROSA, SARTI, ANFOSSI, or PAESIELO.—The most contemptible poetasters we have heard of in England, have never written such trash, as many things which have been honoured with the composition of those charming *maestri di capella*. In short, one may venture to pronounce, that bad words and good music generally constitute an Italian, and the same qualifications reversed, an English Opera.—

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ARTAXERXES and COMUS, by Dr. ARNE, with some very few others, may serve as exceptions to this rule: but all modern English operas, which lay claim to our admiration, are confessedly *pasticcios* of Italian airs, or engraftments of them upon our own; and here we must allow, that the rhythmical flexibility of the English language is so very dissimilar to that of the Italian; that except in some few cases it is very difficult, and often impossible to adapt their music to our words: nor are they so well calculated to display

“ The

- “ The melting voice through mazes running,
- “ Untwisting all the chains that tie
- “ The hidden soul of harmony.”

After having paid a tribute of applause to the favourite amusement of the modern Italians, it will certainly be not unjust to rank this beautiful and charming science among those tending to advance the happiness of a great part of mankind. Indeed, to those whose finely organized nerves are moved by the ‘concord of sweet sounds,’ it will be superfluous to enforce this observation; and to those who are not gifted by nature with this faculty, it will appear as the extravagant

travagant dream of folly, or the insufferable rant of affectation.

In estimating the advantages to be derived from a residence in a country, it would be unpardonable to omit the enumeration of any, which may contribute to the innocent enjoyment of the individual; and the trifling expence for which this elegant propensity may be gratified, renders ITALY, to a real *Dilettante*, a delightful place of habitation.

Painting likewise presents itself to our observation. The historic canvas,

vas, touched by the vivifying pencils of a RAPHAEL, a COREGGIO, a TITIAN, and a PAUL VERONESE, presses on the delighted judgment, and forces it to a contribution of unlimited panegyric. Both seem the indigenous arts of ITALY, and each inhabitant is a musician, and a painter; at least, as a national character, they have all pretensions to it. This every man must admit, who has had an opportunity to witness the incessant strains of vocal and instrumental music, which are heard from their Theatres to their *very squares and streets*; and the various sorts of paintings

ings which adorn their palaces, and cover the naked walls of almost all their cottages. They are also much encouraged by the great use which the Church of ROME makes of them in all her solemnities; and they certainly are no small auxiliaries to devotion.

Some indeed assert, that the soul should be abstracted from every external object, and would produce a Quakers' Meeting as the best means of promoting self-abasement. If all men were real Stoicks, and divested of every mundane idea, the principle

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would

would hold good : but surely to the mass of mankind, the fullen silence of this Assembly, instead of inculcating the essentials of religion, would almost banish them, and the senses, deprived of the “ harp, the lute, and the psaltery,” would generally attach themselves to less harmless inclinations. Music is, therefore, rationally introduced in public worship, provided that it be not too much sophisticated by fugues and cadenzas. These, indeed, obviate its original design, by directing the attention of the hearer rather to the execution of the

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the voices and instruments, than to the adoration of the Deity.

It will be difficult to mention the fine arts, without a dissertation on the principal *traits* of Italian poetry. The temptation is almost superior to opposition, and the bold originality of DANTE, the fascinating versatility of ARIOSTO, the classical elegance of TASSO, and the lyric effusions of METASTASIO can never be past unnoticed.

It is evident, that a great part of our own poets have been well acquainted

C 2



quainted with their beauties, and a man conversant with them, cannot read MILTON *particularly*, without acknowledging a rich and frequent transplantation of them in his *Paradise Lost*. It is certain, that that celebrated poet ~~was~~ extremely attached to this language, in which he wrote many elegant sonnets and jeux d'esprit. One of them deserves a singular attention, because it gives his reasons for so doing, in answer to a fine vein of raillery, with which he supposes the natives of ITALY to address him.

Ridonfi donne, e giovani amorosi  
 M' accostandosi attorno, e perche scrivi,  
 Perche tu scrivi in lingua ignota e strana  
 Verseggiando d' amor e come t'osi ?  
 Dinne, se la tua speme fia mai vana,  
 E di pensieri lo miglior t'arrivi ;  
 Così mi van burlando, altri rivi,  
 Altri lidi t' aspettan, ed altre onde-  
 Nelle cui verdi sponde  
 Spuntati ad hor, ad hor a la tua chioma  
 L' immortal guiderdon d' eterne fronde :  
 Perche alle spalle tue soverchia soma ?  
 Canzon dirotti e tu per me rispondi  
 Dice mia Donna, e'l suo dir, e il mio cuore  
 Questa e' la lingua di cui si vanta amore..

A man of his comprehensive ima-  
 gination, could not read the Italian  
 Poets with an insensibility to their  
 excellence ; by reading them he ac-

quired, and sometimes perhaps unconsciously adopted many of their passages and allusions. A marked similarity of ideas appears in the beginning of the fourth canto of the *Gerusalemme liberata* of TASSO, and some parts of the first, and second book of the *Paradise Lost* of MILTON.

Chiama gli Abitatori de l'ombre eterne  
 Il rauco suon della Tartarea tromba,  
 Treman le spaziose atre caverne  
 E l'ær cieco a quel rumor rimbomba :

\* \* \* \* \*

Tartarei numi di feder piú degni  
 La sovra il sole, onde e' l'origin vostra  
 Che meco gia da i piú felici regni  
 Spinse il gran caso in quest' orribil chiostra :  
 Gli antichi attrui sospetti, e fieri sdegni  
 Noti son troppo, e l' alta impresa nostra.

Or

Or colui regge a suo volere le stelle  
E noi siamo giudicati alme rubelle.

\*

Ed in vece del di sereno e puro,  
De l'aureo Sol, degli stellati giri  
N' ha qui rinchiusi in quest' abisso oscuro  
Né vuol ch'al primo onor per noi f'aspiri.  
E poscia (ahi quanto a ricordarlo e' duro !  
Questo e quel, che più inaspra i miei martiri)  
Ne' bei feggi celesti hà l'uom chiamato  
L'uom vile e di vil fango in terra nato.

The trumpet, now with hoarse-reshounding  
breath,

Convenes the spirits in the shades of death :  
The hollow caverns tremble at the sound ;  
The air re-echoes to the noise around !

\* \* \* \* \*

Tartarean pow'rs ! more worthy of a place  
Above the sun, whence sprung your glorious  
race ;

Who

24      A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

Who lost with me, in one disastrous fight,  
 Yon' blissful seats, and realms of endless light!  
 Too well our former injuries are known;  
 Our bold attempt against th' almighty's throne:  
 See now he rules at will the crystal sphere,  
 And we the name of rebel angels bear:  
 And (sad reverse!) exil'd from cloudless days,  
 The golden sun above, and starry rays;  
 He shuts us here in dreary glooms immur'd;  
 Our purpose thwart'd, and our fame obscur'd;  
 And now elects (a thought that stings me more  
 Than all the pains I e'er endur'd before)  
 To fill our station, man of abject birth,  
 A creature fashion'd of the dust of earth!

*Translated by Hoole.*

The Garden of ARMIDA in the  
 sixteenth canto of *Tasso's Jerusalem*,  
 and that of EDEN in the fourth book  
 of

of *Milton's Paradise Lost*, are not without resemblance.

Acque stagnanti, mobili cristalli,<sup>5</sup>  
 Fior varj, e varie piante ; erbe diverse,  
 Apriche collinette, ombrose valli,  
 Selve, e spelonche in una vista offerse :

\* \* \* \* \*

Co' fiori eterni eterno il frutto dura,  
 E mentre spunta l'un, l' altro matura.

\*

Nel tronco istesso, e tra l' istessa foglia  
 Sovra il nascente fico invecchia il fico.  
 Pendono a un ramo, un con dorata spoglia,  
 L' altro con verde, il nuovo, e il pomo antico.  
 Lussureggiante serpe alto, e germoglia  
 La torta vite, ov' é piú l orto aprico :  
 Qui l' uva há in fiori acerba, e qui d' or l' have ;  
 E di piropo, e già di nettar grave.

\*

Tar-

26 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

Vezzosi augelli infra le verdi fronde  
 Temprano a prova lascivette note.  
 Mormora l' aura, e fa le foglia, e l'onde  
 Garrir, che variamente elle percote.  
 Quando tacciono gli augelli, alto risponde ;  
 Quando cantan gli augei, piú lieve scote :

\* \* \* \* \*

The garden then unfolds a beauteous scene,  
 With flow'rs adorn'd and ever-living green.  
 There silver lakes reflect the beaming day ;  
 Here crystal streams in gurgling fountains play :  
 Cool vales descend, and sunny hills arise,  
 And groves, and caves, and grottoes, strike the  
 eyes,

\* \* \* \* \*

Eternal fruits on every branch endure,  
 Those swelling from their buds, and these  
 mature.

There, on one parent stock, the leaves among,  
 With ripen'd figs, the figs unripen'd hung.

De-



Depending apples here the boughs unfold ;  
 Those green in youth, these mellow'd into gold.  
 The vine luxuriant rears her arms on high,  
 And curls her tendrils to the genial sky :  
 There the crude grapes no grateful sweet produce,  
 And here impurpl'd yield nectareous juice :  
 The joyous birds, conceal'd in ev'ry grove,  
 With gentle strife prolong the notes of love.  
 Soft zephyrs breathe on woods and waters  
 round ;  
 The woods and waters yield a murm'ring sound :  
 When cease the tuneful choir, the wind replies ;  
 But, when they sing, in gentle whispers dies :  
 By turns they sink, by turns their music raise,  
 And blend, with equal skill, harmonious lays.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Translated by Hoole.*

There are, however, two very striking,  
 and very opposite delineations of  
 the

the ' Prince of darkness' by the pencils of these great Poets, and both are so appropriate to the character they meant to represent, that it would be difficult to decide on their comparative merit.

Orrida maestà nel fiero aspetto  
 Terrore accresce, e più superbo il rende :  
 Rosseggian gli occhi, e di veneno infetto,  
 Come infautta cometa, il guardo splende :  
 Gl'involge il mento, e su l'irsuto petto  
 Ispida, e folta la gran barba scende,  
 E in guisa di voragine profonda  
 S' apre la bocca d' atro sangue immonda.

Qual'i fumi sulfurei, ed infiammati  
 Escon di Mongibello, e'l puzzo, e'l tuono ;  
 Tal de la fiera bocca i negri fiati,  
 Tale il fetore, e le faville sono:

A hor-

A horrid majesty his looks express'd,  
 Which scatter'd terror, and his pride increas'd :  
 His fanguine eyes wth baleful venom stare,  
 And, like a comet, cast a dismal glare :  
 A length of beard descending o'er his breast,  
 In rugged curls, conceals his hairy chest ;  
 And, like a whirlpool in the roaring flood,  
 Wide gapes his mouth obscene with clotted blood.  
 As smoky fires from burning *Ætna* rise,  
 And steaming sulphur that infects the skies ;  
 So from his throat the cloudy sparkles came,  
 With pestilential breath and ruddy flame.

*Translated by Hoole.*

——— Thus far these beyond  
 Compare of mortal prowess yet observ'd  
 Their dread commander : he above the rest  
 In shape and gesture, proudly eminent  
 Stood like a tower ; his form had yet not lost  
 All her original brightness, nor appear'd  
 Less than arch-angel ruin'd, and th' excess  
 Of glory 'obscur'd ; as when the sun new risen  
Looks

Looks through the horizontal misty air  
Shorn of his beams ; or from behind the moon  
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds  
On half the nations, and with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone  
Above them all the arch-angel ; but his face  
Deep scars of thunder had entrench'd, and care  
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows  
Of dauntless courage and considerate pride  
Waiting revenge.

The works of DANTE and ARIOSTO  
have infinite charms in their native  
dress ; nor indeed are their excellen-  
cies unknown to the English reader,  
so far as translations can convey the  
spirit of the originals. But DANTE  
deserves a peculiar attention, as the  
earliest

earliest Italian Bard; and DOCTOR MARTINELLI, in his letter to the EARL of ORFORD, which is prefixed to the Florentine edition of his works, makes the following observations upon him.

“ DANTE gives an unequivocal proof of his having excelled most other poets in genius; HOMER and VIRGIL wrote languages in full maturity and perfection; but *he* was obliged to create the greatest part of that language, in which he formed his poem. This he did so happily, that if we allow VIRGIL to have extracted

tracted GOLD *e stercore Ennii*, we must allow the verses of DANTE to be still the PUREST GOLD, notwithstanding the distance of four centuries, since they were written.

“ Let it, therefore, be remembered, that he was the first writer, who gave dignity to the Italian language, and to this moment he is considered as the principal support and ornament of it. We cannot say of DANTE, as we usually do of other poets, that there are no beauties or inventions in him, which are not in HOMER, because HOMER was lost  
to



to the knowledge of the literary world in ITALY, till after the death of this poet. His allusions are, for the most part, beautiful, and the effort of his own genius *alone*; his descriptions are wonderfully forcible and original; and even his sublime passages are expressed in the most common words. His style, it is true, is obscure to superficial Critics; but the obscurity ceases to any reader acquainted with the times and circumstances when he wrote."

Among the best productions of this celebrated poet, is the beginning of

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the third canto of his *INFERNO*, with the solemn inscription over the gate of Hell, and a few subsequent verses. It is in itself so fine, and so ably rendered in English by Mr. BOYD, that it would be inexcusable not to give the original as well as the translation.

*PER ME si va' nella città dolente :*

*PER ME si va nell' eterno dolore*

*PER ME si va tra la perduta gente*

*Giustizia mosse' l mio alto Fattore :*

*Fecemi la Divina Potestate,*

*La somma Sapienza, e il Primo Amore,*

*Dinanzi a me non fur cose create,*

*Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro :*

*Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrate.*

*Queste*

Queste parole di colore oscuro  
Vid' io scritte al sommo d' una porta :  
Perch' io : Maestro, il senso lor m'è duro  
Ed egli a me, come persona accorta :  
Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto :  
Ogni viltà convien, che qui sia morta.  
Noi sem venuti al luogo, ov' i' t'ho detto,  
Che tu vedrai e genti dolorose,  
Ch' hanno perduto 'l ben dell' intelletto  
E poiche la sua mano alla mia pose,  
Con lieto volto, onde' i' mi confortai,  
Mi mise dentro alle segrete cose.  
Quivi *sospiri, 'pianti, ed alti guai*  
Risonavan per l'aer senza stelle,  
Perch' io al comminciar ne lagrimai.  
*Diverse lingue, orribili favelle,*  
*Parole di dolore, accenti d'ira,*  
*Voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle*  
Facevano un tumulto, il qual s'aggira  
Sempre'n quell' aria senza tempo tinta,  
Come la rena, quando il turbo spira.

## I.

THRO' ME, the newly-damn'd for ever fleet,  
 In ceaseless shoals to pain's eternal seat;  
 THRO' ME they march, and join the tortur'd crew.  
 The mighty GULPH offended JUSTICE made;  
 Unbounded pow'r the strong foundation laid,  
 And LOVE, by WISDOM led, the limits drew.

## II.

Long ere the infant world arose to light,  
 I found a being in the womb of night.  
 Eldest of all—but things that ever last!  
 AND I FOR EVER LAST!—Ye HEIRS of HELL,  
 Here bid at once your ling'ring HOPE farewell,  
 And mourn the moment of repentance past!

## III.

This salutation sad mine eyes amaz'd,  
 As on the high PLUTONIAN arch I gaz'd,  
 In dark and dreadful characters pourtray'd:

“How

“How dire the menace of the STYGIAN scroll”  
With deep concern, I cried, the MANTUAN soul,  
With friendly words, my sinking spirits stay’d.

IV.

“Let no unmanly thought the place profane,  
The fated hour commands you to restrain  
The sickly fancies bred by wayward fear!  
This is the scene I promis’d to unfold,  
The regions of ETERNAL WRATH behold!  
Nor tremble to survey her terrors near!

V.

“Here those, in search of bliss who madly stray’d  
From reason’s path, by passion’s lure betray’d,  
Lament the sad result!” then down the steep  
With new-born hope, his mate the MANTUAN  
led,  
Where wide before my wond’ring eyes were  
spread  
The horrid secrets of the boundless deep.

## VI.

Thence Oh ! what wailings from the abject  
throng

Around the starless sky incessant rung ;  
The *short, shrill shriek*, and long resounding groan,  
The *thick sob*, panting thro' the cheerless air  
The lamentable strain of sad despair,  
And blasphemy, with fierce relentless tone.

## VII.

Vollying around, the full, infernal choir,  
Barbarian tongues, and plaints, and words of ire  
(With oft' between the harsh inflicted blow)  
In loud discordance from the tribes forlorn  
Tumultuous rose, as in a whirlwind borne,  
With execrations mix'd, and murmurs low.

*Translated by Boyd.*

In



In glancing at the *charms* of Italian Poetry, the ORLANDO FURIOSO of ARIOSTO has an indisputable claim to distinction. Except our own immortal SHAKESPEARE, there never has existed a bard with such a comprehensive variety of beauties, and such excursive fallies of imagination. Ranging with him in his REGIONS of ROMANCE, we forget his prominent inconsistencies; the excited CURIOSITY follows him, with confidence, thro' his solitary Forests; it is equally pleased with the gothic gloom of his castles, and the splendid imagery of his enchantments. Dreary wilds, delight-

lightful gardens, myrtle groves, and every object of nature receive the most impressivè energy from his Pen. His fancy explores a boundless tract of *terra incognita* ; and, like the BEE, he collect's his sweets, as much from the slighted *Thyme* of the desert, as from the admired *Rose* of the parterre. Every thing rises in rich succession before him, and seems called into existence by the fervour of his description.

It is, however, remarkable, though no poet "bodies forth the forms of things" with more happiness than ARIOSTO, that he writes without the  
smallest

smallest effort, and scarcely ever employs a quaint expression to develop his thoughts. He uses language with such inimitable skill and delicacy, that he appears to play, as it were, with his subject. His invention is at all times astonishing; but it is never more fertile than when he paints, by personification, the different passions, and affections of mankind. The mission of the Angel Michael in pursuit of SILENCE and DISCORD, is finely, and singularly descriptive in his fourteenth Canto. The passage is indeed long; but, as lovers of good poetry will see its insertion with no displea-

pleasure, an apology for its length  
will be needless.

Dovunque drizza Michel Angel l'ale,  
Fuggon le nubi, e torna il Ciel sereno,  
Gli gira intorno un aureo cerchio, quale  
Veggiam di notte lampeggiar baleno.  
Seco pensa tra via, dove si cale  
Il celeste corrier per fallir meno  
A trovar quel nemico di parole,  
A cui la prima commission far vuole.

---

Vien scorrendo, ov' egli abiti, ov' egli usi,  
E si accordaro in fin tutti i pensieri,  
Che dé Frati, e di' Monachi rinchiusi  
Lo può trovare in chiese, in Monasteri;  
Dove sono i parlari in modo esclusi,  
Che 'l Silenziò ove cantano i salteri,  
Ove dormono, ove hanno la piantanza,  
E finalmente è scritto in ogni stanza.

Credendo quivi ritrovarlo, mosse  
Con maggior fretta le dorate penne ;  
E di veder, ch' ancor Pace vi fosse,  
Quiete, e Carità sicuro tenne.  
Ma da 'l opinion sua ritrovosse  
Tosto ingannato, che nel chiosstro venne :  
Non é Silenzio quivi, e gli fu ditto,  
Che non v' abita più, fuor che in iscritto.

---

Nè Pietà, nè Quiete, nè Umiltade,  
Nè quivi Amor, nè quivi Pace mira.  
Ben vi fur già, ma ne l'antica etade ;  
Che le cacciar Gola, avarizia, ed Ira,  
Superbia, Invidia, Inerzia e Crudeltade.  
Di tanta novità l' Angel si ammira ;  
Andò guardando quella brutta schiera,  
E vide, eh' anco la Discordia v'era ;

Quella

Quella, che gli avea detto il Padre eterno  
Dopo il Silenzio, che trovar dovesse.  
Pensato avea di far la via d' Averno,  
Che si credea, che trà dannati stesse; |  
E ritrovolla in questo nuovo Inferno  
(Chi 'l crederia ?) tra santi uffici, e messe.  
Par di strano a Michel, ch'ella vi sia,  
Che per trovar credea di far gran via.

---

La conobbe al vestir di color cento,  
Fatto a liste ineguali, ed infinite,  
Ch' or la coprono, or no, che i passi, e'l vento  
Le giùno aprendo, ch' erano sdrucite.  
I crini avea qual d'oro, e qual d'argento,  
E neri, e bigi, e aver pareano lite;  
Altri in treccia, altri in nastro eran raccolti  
Molti a le spalle, alcuni al petto sciolti.

---

Di cittatorie piene, e di libelli,  
D' esami e di carte di proccure



Avea le mani, e il seno, e gran fastelli  
Di chiose, di configli e di letture ;  
Per cui le facultà dè poverelli  
Non sono mai ne le città sicure,  
Avea dietro, e dinanzi, e d'ambi i lati,  
Notai, Procuratori ed Avvocati.

---

La chiama a se Michele, e le comanda,  
Che tra i più forti Saracini scenda,  
E cagion trovi, che con memoranda  
Ruina insieme a guerreggiar gli accenda.  
Poi del Silenzio nuova le domanda :  
Facilmente esser può ch'essa n' intenda ;  
Sì come quella, ch' accendendo fochi  
Di qua, e di là va per diversi lochi.

---

Rispose la Discordia : Io non ho a mente,  
In alcun loco averlo mai veduto :

Udito

46 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

Udito l' ho ben nominar sovente,  
E molto commendarlo per astuto.  
Ma la Fraude, una qui di nostra gente,  
Che compagnia tal volta gli ha tenuto,  
Penso, che dir te ne saprà novella :  
E verso una alzò il dito, e disse : E' quella.

---

Avea piacevol viso, abito onesto,  
Un umil volger d' occhi, un andar grave,  
Un parlar sì benigno, e sì modesto,  
Che pareva Gabriel, che dicesse, Ave.  
Era brutta, e deforme in tutto il resto :  
Ma nascondeva queste fattezze prave  
Con lungo abito, e largo, e sotto quello  
Attofficato avea sempre il coltello:

---

Domanda a costei l' Angelo, che via  
Debba tener sì, che' l Silenzio trove.  
Disse la Fraude : Già costui solia

Fra virtudi abitare, e non altrove ;  
Con Benedetto, e con quelli di Elia  
Ne le Badie, quando erano ancor nove ;  
Fe' ne le Scolè affai de la sua vita  
Al tempo de Pittagora, e d' Archita.

---

Mancati quei Filosofi, e quei Santi,  
Che lo solean tener nel cammin ritto ;  
Da gli onesti costumi, ch' avea innanti,  
Fece a le scelleraggini tragitto.  
Cominciò andar la notte con gli amanti,  
Indi coi ladri, e fare ogni delitto ;  
Molto col Tradimento egli dimora ;  
Veduto l' ho con l' Omicidio ancora.

---

Con quei, che falsan le monete ha usanza  
Di ripararsi in qualche buca scura,

Così

48 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

Così spesso compagni muta, e stanza,  
Che 'l ritrovarlo ti faria ventura.  
Ma pur ho d' insegnartelo speranza  
Se d' arrivare a mezza notte hai cura  
A la casa del Sonno; senza fallo  
Potrai (che quivi dorme) ritrovallo.

---

Ben che foglia la Fraude esser bugiarda,  
Pur è tanto il suo dir simile al vero,  
Che l' Angelo lo crede; indi non tarda  
A volarsene fuor del Monastero..  
Tempra il batter de l' ali, e studia, e guarda  
Giugnere in tempo al fin del suo sentiero,  
Ch' a la casa del Sonno, che ben dove  
Era sapea, questo Silenzio trove.

---

Giace in Arabia una valletta amena  
Lontana da cittadi e da villaggi,  
Ch' a l' ombra di duo monti e tutta piena

D' antichi

D'antichi abeti, e di robusti faggi.  
Il sole indarno il chiaro dì vi mena,  
Che non vi può mai penetrar co i raggi,  
Sì gli è la via da' folti rami tronca ;  
E quivi entra sotterra una spelonca.

---

Sotto la negra selva una capace,  
E spaziosa grotta entra nel fasso ;  
Di cui la fronte l' edera seguace  
Tutta aggirando va con torto passo.  
In questo albergo il grave Sonno giace ;  
L' Ozio da un canto corpulento, e grasso,  
Da l'altro la Pigrizia in terra fiede,  
Che non può andare, e mal si regge in piede.

---

Lo smemorato Obbligo sta su la porta ;  
Non lascia entrar, ne riconosce alcuno ;  
Non ascolta imbasciata, nè riporta,

E

E pari-

50      A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

E parimente tien cacciato ogn' uno.  
 Il Silenzio va intorno, e fa la scorta,  
 Ha le scarpe di feltro e'l mantel bruno,  
 Ed a quanti n' incontra, di lontano,  
 Chi non debban venir, cenna con mano.

---

Where'er his Course the radiant Envoy steers,  
 The clouds disperse, the troubled ether clears:  
 And round him plays a circling blaze of light,  
 Such as when meteors stream thro' dusky night.

While still he ponders in his zealous mind  
 Where best this enemy of speech to find;  
 At length he deems that silence sure may dwell  
 With Monks and Abbots in the cloister'd cell,  
 The church's hallow'd walls, where never ear  
 Might other sound than chanted psalters hear:  
 Where, fed with slender meals, each quiet sleeps,  
 Where every room inscrib'd the name of silence  
 keeps.

To



To meet him there he certain hope assumes,  
 And moves, with speed increas'd, his golden  
     plumes;

Nor him alone, but there expects to find  
 Fair Peace and Charity together join'd.

No Silence there he found, he view'd alone  
 His name enroll'd, himself no longer known :

Nor Peace, nor Charity was there to see,

Nor Love, nor Faith, nor meek Humility ;

These held their station there in days of yore,

But now, long since expell'd, are seen no more.

For these, Wrath, Av'rice, Gluttony and Pride  
 Sloth, Cruelty, and Envy there reside.

The angel, wond'ring at a sight so new,

Saw Discord soon amidst the brutal crew,

Her, in whose search he meant, at heaven's com-  
     mand

T' explore Avernus' ever mournful strand ;

And lo ! he finds her now (most strange to tell)

Midst prayers and masses in this earthly hell.

52      A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

He knew her by the vesture's hundred dyes,  
 Of lists unnumber'd of unequal size,  
 Which rent in shreds, but ill those limbs conceal'd  
 By every step or breath of wind reveal'd.  
 Her uncomb'd hairs seem'd constant strife to hold,  
 Of various hues, black, silver, brown, and gold.  
 Some hung in ringlets, some in knots were ty'd;  
 Her bosom some, and some her shoulders hide:  
 Her hands and lap a countless medley bore  
 Of writs, citations, (an exhaustless store !)  
 Oppression's various forms, that make the poor  
 In cities never find their state secure.  
 Before, behind, on either side her stand  
 Attornies, Notaries,—a brawling band !

Her Michael call'd, and bade her instant go,  
 To seek where lay encamp'd the Pagan foe,  
 And every art essay, that might engage  
 Their bravest knights in strife and deathful rage.  
 For Silence then he ask'd, of whom full well  
 He deem'd that Discord might some tidings tell ;

As

As one, who still on kindling flames intent,  
Through every land of earth's wide region went.

Amidst my travel (Discord thus replies)

*That* Silence never yet has met my eyes :  
Though oft his name from many have I heard,  
Oft heard his praise for craft and guile preferr'd;  
But Fraud, sometime the partner of his way,  
Our comrade here, can best his haunts betray.  
Lo ! where she stands—She said, and pointing  
show'd,

Where Fraud appear'd amidst the motley crow'd.  
Her garb was decent, lovely was her face ;  
Her eyes were bashful, sober was her pace ;  
With speech, whose charms might every heart  
affail,

Like his who' gave the blest salute of—  
“ hail !”

But all deform'd and brutal was the rest,  
Which close she cover'd with her ample vest,  
Beneath whose folds, prepar'd for bloody strife,  
Her hand for ever grasp'd a poison'd knife.

Of her the angel ask'd : and Fraud reply'd ;  
Silence was wont with Virtue to reside,  
With Benedict and old Elias' train,  
In convents where religion first began :  
Much time he chose in learned schools to pass,  
With Architas and wife Pythagoras.  
But when those faints and sages were no more,  
That kept him true to wisdom's righteous lore,  
His godly customs learnt he soon forsook,  
And to new paths his wandering feet betock,  
Fond lovers first at midnight hour he pair'd ;  
Then, mix'd with thieves, in all their counsils  
    shar'd.  
With treason oft he dwells, and him I view'd  
Late join'd with murder stain'd in human blood.  
With coiners has he oft been known to dwell,  
Remote from view, in some sequester'd cell.  
So much he shifts his partners and his place,  
'Tis hard t' affirm where best his steps to trace:

Yet

Yet have I hope to guide your course aright :  
Go—seek, when shade proclaims the middle  
night,

The house of sleep, there may'st thou silence  
find,

Where oft he rests remote from human kind.

Though Fraud was ever wont in lies to deal,  
Yet here such seeming truth her words reveal,  
The angel trusts her faith, no longer stays  
But speeding from the convent, wide displays  
His rapid wings, to reach by noon of night  
The house of sleep, with unremitting flight.

A pleasing vale beneath Arabia's skies,  
From peopled towns and cities distant lies :  
Two lofty mountains hide the depth below,  
Where ancient firs, and sturdy beeches grow.  
The sun around reveals his chearing day,  
But the thick grove admits no straggling ray  
To pierce the boughs : immers'd in sacred shades,  
A spacious CAVE the dusky rock pervades.

The

56 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

The creeping ivy on the front is seen,  
 And o'er the entrance winds her curling green.  
 Here drowsy SLEEP has fix'd her noiseless  
                     throne,  
 Here INDOLENCE reclines with limbs o'ergrown  
 Tho' sluggish ease ; and SLOTH, whose trem-  
                     bling feet  
 Refuse their aid, and sink beneath her weight.  
 Before the portal dull OBLIVION goes,  
 He suffers none to pass, for none he knows.  
 SILENCE maintains the watch and walks the  
                     round,  
 In shoes of felt, with sable garments bound ;  
 And oft as any thither bend their pace,  
 He waves his hand and warns them from the  
                     place.

*Translated by Hoole.*

English literature is considerably  
 indebted to Mr. HOOLE, for the va-  
 luable accessions of the *Orlando Furioso*,  
   of



of the *Gerusalemme liberata*, and of several operas of METASTASIO, which he has so well translated, and so elegantly naturalized. It is particularly to be regretted, that he has proceeded no further with the last author, who unites in himself almost all the advantages of the ancient and modern drama. “He is distinguished (as his translator justly says) sometimes by graceful familiarity, and sometimes by easy magnificence; his mien is soft, though his sentiments are sublime.”

Amidst the innumerable beauties of METASTASIO, the following soliloquy

quy of TITUS, in his opera of *'la Clemenza di Tito*, can never be too much admired: It discovers the inmost recesses of a good and great man's heart, and the various conflict of his feelings upon the supposed guilt of his friend.

E dove mai s'intese  
 Più contumace infedeltà? Poteva  
 Il più tenero padre un figlio reo  
 Trattar con più dolcezza? Anche innocente  
 D'ogn'altro error, faria di vita indegno  
 Per questo sol. Deggio alla mia negletta  
 Disprezzata clemenza una vendetta  
 Vendetta! Ah Tito! E tu sarai capace  
 D'un sì basso desio; che rende eguale  
 L'offeso all' offensor? Merita invero

Gran lode una vendetta, ove non costi  
Più che il volerla. *Il torre altrui la vita*  
*E' facoltà commune*

*Al più vil della terra ; il darla è solo*  
De' numi e de' Regnanti. Eh viva . . . . .  
Invano

Parlan dunque le leggi ? Io lor custode  
L'eseguisco così ? Di Sesto amico  
Non sà Tito scordarsi ? Han pur saputo  
Obliar d'esser padri e Manlio, e Bruto.  
Sieguanfi i grandi esempj. Ogn' altro affetto  
D' amicizia, et pietà taccia per ora.  
Sesto è reo ; Sesto mora . . . . Eccoci alfine  
Sulle vie del rigore. Eccoci aspersi  
Di cittadino sangue . . . e s'incommincia  
Dal sangue d'un Amico. Or che diranno  
I posterì di noi ? Diran, che in Tito  
Si stancò la clemenza,  
Come in Silla e in Augusto  
La crudelta : Forse diran che troppo

Rigido

60 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

Rigido io fui, ch' eran difese al reo  
 I natali e l' età; che un primo errore  
 Punir non si dovea : che un ramo infermo  
 Subito non recide  
 Saggio cultor, se a rifanarlo invano  
 Molto pria non sudò; che Tito alfine  
 Era l' offeso, e che le proprie offese  
 Senza ingiuria del giusto  
 Ben poteva obliar . . . . Mà dunque io faccio  
 Si gran forza al mio cor ? Nè almen sicuro  
 Sarò, ch' altri m' approvi ? Ah non si lasci  
 Il solito cammin. Viva 'l amico  
 Benche infedele; e se accusarmi il mondo  
 Vuol pur di qualch' errore  
 M' accusi di pietà non di rigore.

*Clemenza di Tito atto Terzo Scena VII.*

When was there ever heard such stubborn false-  
 hood !  
 Could ev'n the tenderest father treat more gently  
 A guilty

A guilty son? Yes, for my grace condemn'd,  
 Tho' innocent of ev'ry other crime,  
 He merits not to live : I owe revenge  
 To my despis'd, neglected clemency.

[*goes towards the table, then stops*]

Revenge!—ah! Titus, wilt thou then descend  
 So low, to harbour such a *base* desire,  
 That makes th' offended and offender equal?  
 What mighty praise is his who uses pow'r  
 For his revenge? To take another's life  
 Is what the *meanest* of mankind can boast;  
 To give it, is the glorious privilege  
 Of GODS and KINGS *alone*.—Then let him live—  
 And shall the laws in vain decide? Shall I,  
 Their guardian, thus enforce them? Cannot

Titus

Forget his friend in Sextus? Did not Brutus  
 And Manlius once forget the name of father?  
 O! let me now pursue those great examples.

Hence—

62      A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

Henceforth the thoughts of friendship and of  
mercy

Be blotted from my breast—Sextus is  
guilty ;

Sextus shall die—[*signs the paper*]—Behold at  
length I tread

The paths of rigour ; see me stain'd with blood,  
Blood of my fellow-citizens : my friend  
Is singled first to bear the dreadful sentence !

How will posterity receive this deed ?

Will they not say that clemency in Titus

Was weary'd out, as cruelty was once

In Scylla and Augustus ? They may say

I've been too rigid ; that his birth, his youth  
Might have excus'd him ; that the first offence

Should not be punished ; that the skilful swain

Lops not with thoughtless haste some branch  
unfoun'd,

Till all his art has prov'd in vain to save it.

They'll



They'll say, perhaps that *Titus* was th' offended,  
 And might, without a breach of public justice,  
 Have pardon'd crimes contrived against himself.  
 Then shall I do my heart *such violence*,  
 Yet rest uncertain of the world's approval?  
 No, let me not forsake the wonted path  
 My nature shews—tho' faithless, yet my friend  
 Shall live—[*tears the paper*—and if I must en-  
                   dure the tongue  
 Of public censure, let me be condemn'd  
 For mercy, not for rigour.—

*Translated by Hoole.*

There seems such a coincidence  
 of thought, and such a train of rea-  
 soning in another soliloquy of TI-  
 TUS, and in one of Henry the Sixth  
 by SHAKESPEARE, that it may be  
                                   worth

worth while to put them in the same point of view.

E' pur di chi regna  
 Infelice il destino ! A noi si nega  
 Cio 'che a piu' bassi è dato. In mezzo al bosco  
 Quel villanel mendico à cui circonda  
 Ruvida lana il rozzo fianco, a cui  
 E' mal fido riparo  
 Dall' ingiurie del ciel tugurio informe  
 Placido i sonni dorme ;  
 Passa tranquillo i dì ; molto non brama ;  
 Sà chi l'odia, e chi l'ama ; unito ò solo  
 Torna sicuro alla foresta, al monte ;  
 E vede il core a ciasched' uno in fronte.  
 Noi fra tante grandezze  
 Sempre incerti viviam ; che in faccia a noi  
 La speranza e il timore  
 Sulla fronte d' ognun trasforma il cuore.

*Clemenza di Tito atto terzo scena quarta.*

O God!

O God ! methinks, it were a happy life  
To be no better than a homely swain  
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,  
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,  
Thereby to see the minutes how they run :  
How many makes the hour full complear,  
How many hours bring about the day,  
How many days will finish up the year,  
How many years a mortal man may live.  
When this is known, then to divide the time ;  
So many hours must I tend my flock ;  
So many hours must I take my rest :  
So many hours must I contemplate ;  
So many hours must I sport myself ;  
So many days my ewes have been with young ;  
So many weeks ere the poor fools will yean ;  
So many months ere I shall share the fleece :  
So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years  
Past over to the end they were created  
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.

F

Ah !

66 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

Ah ! what a life were this ! how sweet, how  
lovely !

Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade  
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,  
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy  
To Kings, that fear their subjects treachery ?  
O, yes, it doth ; a thousand fold it doth.  
And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,  
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,  
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,  
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,  
Is far beyond a Prince's delicates,  
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,  
His body couched in a curious bed,  
When care, mistrust and treasons wait upon him.

*The third part of Henry the sixth, act the 2d.*

In examining the writings of ME-  
TASTASIO, it may not be amiss to  
ob-

observe, that his piece of *'Gioas Re di Giuda* is evidently upon the same plan as the celebrated *Athalie* of Racine; but their beauties are so very dissimilar, that he must have been studiously careful to have repressed, as much as possible, any identity of ideas suggested by the subject. The speeches of the High-priest to Joash raised to the throne of Judah in *'Athalie* and *'Gioas* are remarkable instances of it.

O mon fils, de ce nom j'ose encore vous nommer,  
Souffrez cette tendresse & pardonnez aux larmes  
Que m' arrachent pour vous de trop justes al-  
larmes.

Loin du trone nourri, de ce fatal honneur  
 Helas ! vous ignorez le charme empoisonneur ;  
 De l' absolu pouvoir vous ignorez l' ivresse,  
 Et des laches flatteurs la voix enchanteresse.  
 Bientot ils vous diront que les plus saintes loix  
 Maitresses du vil peuple, obeissent aux Rois ;  
 Qu'un Roi n'a d'autre frein que sa volonte'  
 meme ;

Qu'il doit immoler tout a sa grandeur supreme,  
 Qu' aux larmes, au travail le peuple est  
 condamné,

Et d'un sceptre de fer veut etre gouverné ;  
 Que s'il n'est opprimé', tôt ou tard il opprime.  
 Ainsy de piège en piège & d'abîme en abîme  
 Corrompant de vos mœurs l'aimable purété,  
 Il vous feront enfin hair la verité ;  
 Vous peindront la vertu sous une affreuse image.  
 Helas ! Ils ont des Rois egaré le plus sage.



Promettez sur ce livre, & devant ces temoins  
Que Dieu fera toujours le premier de vos soins.

*Athalie Acte IV. scene III.*

---

T' esponi  
I doveri d'un Re.—Questo e il momento  
Di ripetergli, o figlio. Oggi d'un regno  
Dio ti fà don, mà del suo dono un giorno  
Ragion ti chiederà ; tremane : e questo  
Durissimo giudizio, a cui t' esponi,  
Sempre in mente ti stia. Comincia il regno  
Da te medesimo. I desiderj tuoi  
Sino i primi vassalli ; onde i soggetti  
Abbiano, in chi commanda,  
L'esempio d'ubidir. Sia quel, che dei,  
Non quel, che puoi, dell' opre tue misura.  
Il publico procura  
Più, che il tuo ben. Fà che in te s'ami il padre,  
Non si tema il tiranno. E' de' regnanti  
Mal sicuro custode

L'altrui timore ; e non si svelle a forza  
 L'amore altrui. Premj dispensa, e pene  
 Con esatta ragion : Tardo risolvi ;  
 Sollecito eseguisci : E non fidarti  
 Di lingua adulatrice,  
 Con vile assenso a lusingarti intesa ;  
 Mà porta in ogn' impresa  
 La Prudenza per guida,  
 Per compagno il valore,  
 La giustizia sugli occhj, e Dio nel core.

*Gioas Parte seconda.*

This day thy God has given thee a Kingdom;  
 But at another day, he will require  
 A full and just account of all thy deeds.  
 Let this great truth be ever present with thee :  
 Begin thy reign upon thyself ; and make  
 'Thine own DESIRES the *first* among thy VASSALS,  
 'That *those*, whom thou commandest, may observe  
*Example of obedience* in their MONARCH.

Act as thy DUTY, not thy Pow'r suggests:  
 With anxious care procure the public weal  
 More than thine own advantage. Shew thyself  
 The FATHER lov'd, and not the TYRANT  
 fear'd:

For fear is but a poor security,  
 Nor can we take by force the love of others.  
 With nice distinction punish and reward.  
 Slowly resolve, and quickly execute:  
 Nor trust the servile, parasitic tongues  
 That will infest thy throne; but always have  
 PRUDENCE thy GUIDE, VALOUR thy COM-  
 PANION,  
 JUSTICE in thine EYE, and GOD in thy HEART.

*Translated by the Author.*

Both speeches are beautifully didactic; but it would be difficult to determine, whether the affectionate soli-

solicitude of RACINE'S JOAD, or the bold integrity of METASTASIO'S GIOIADA were most suitable to the youthful monarch they are supposed to address. The energetic brevity of the Italian sentiments is, notwithstanding, infinitely preferable to that dilated *verbiage* which is so justly imputable to all the French poets.

If it be allowed, that in dramatic poetry METASTASIO emits a distinguished lustre amidst the galaxy of the most eminent writers of EUROPE; we cannot hesitate to give him the first place in the first rank of lyric

com-

composition. There his powers can never be over-rated, whether we listen to the sentiments of hope or fear, joy or anguish, to the graceful levity, or the forcible reflexions of his mellifluous muse. A few of his songs may serve to shew the elegance of his taste, and the universality of his genius.

Sempre è maggior del vero

L'idea d'una sventura

*Al credulo pensiero*

*Dipinta dal timor.*

Chi stolto il mal figura,

Affretta il proprio affanno ;

Ed *assicura* un danno,

Quando è *dubbioso* ancor.

*Attilio Regolo.*

Ah !

74 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

Ah ! che nè *mal verace*  
 Nè *vero ben* fi dà :  
 Prendono qualità  
 Dà nostri affetti.  
 Secondo in guerra ò in pace  
 Trovano il nostro cor ;  
 Cangiano di color  
 Tutti gli oggetti.

*Demofonte.*

Vò fulcando un mar crudele  
 Senza vele,  
 E senza farte :  
 Freme l'onda, il ciel s'imbruna,  
 Cresce il vento, e manca l'arte ;  
 E il voler della fortuna  
 Son costretto à seguitar.  
 Infelice ! in questo stato]  
 Son dà tutti abbandonato :

Meco



Meco sola è l'innocenza,  
Che mi porta a naufragar.

*Artaserse.*

E' falso il dir, che uccida,  
Se dura, un gran dolore :  
E che, se non si muore,  
Sia facile a soffrir.  
Questa, ch'io provo, è pena,  
Che avanza  
Ogni costanza ;  
Che il viver m' avvelena,  
E non mi farà morir.

*Adriano.*

E' pena troppo barbara  
Sentirsi oh Dio, morir ;  
E non poter mai dir,  
Morir mi sento.

V'e

76 A COMPARATIVE SKETCH

V'è nel lagnarfi, e piangere,  
 V'è un ombra di piacer ;  
 Mâ struggerfi, e tacer  
 Tutto è tormento.

*Antigono.*

Da voi cari lumi,  
 Dipende il mio stato ;  
 Voi siete i miei Numi,  
 Voi siete il mio fato ;  
 A vostro talento  
 Mi sento cangiar.  
 Ardir m' ispirate,  
 Se lieti splendete ;  
 Se torbidi siete  
 Mi fate tremar.

*Attilio Regolo.*

A luminous mind, solid when se-  
 rious, and charming when trifling, is  
 pecu-

peculiarly *that* of METASTASIO; he graces whatever he touches, and gives even dignity to subjects which seem to exclude it. It were endless to select additional proofs, where almost every song has such seducing, such irresistible charms; and it will be vain to enlarge upon the merits of an author acknowledged by all EUROPE, to have so great and so just a claim to admiration.

To a lover of music, painting and poetry, ITALY is a delightful country; but to a MAN OF AN EXPANDED MIND, ROME *in particular* has indescribable

scribable attractions. To survey the remains of the erst "CLOUD CAPT TOWERS, GORGEOUS PALACES, and SOLEMN TEMPLES" of this GREAT AND ANCIENT CITY;—to see in fragments THE TRIUMPHAL ARCHES OF IMPERIAL VANITY erected for the purpose of immortalizing CONQUESTS AND MURDERS—To mark THE VERY SPOT where the ELOQUENCE OF CICERO has so often thundered to his ENRAPTURED AUDITORY—"must give him pause."—*These* are inestimable RELIQUES in the SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY; and he ponders on the many generations  
of

of PRINCES and of PEASANTS swept  
by NATURE from the surface of the  
globe since THIS MEMORABLE POINT  
OF TIME.

A rational student of antiquity  
would be solicitous to know, *to what*  
*precise* eminence Sciences have been  
carried in ancient nations; and whe-  
ther early authors have not exagger-  
ated? He would rejoice to find any  
certain *criteria* by which he could  
persuade himself, that their repre-  
sentations did not proceed from the  
FASCINATED EYE OF ENTHUSIASM,  
en-

enjoying the first emerfion of HUMAN  
INGENUITY from barbarifm.

Befides ftupendous monuments of  
Architefture, he would be enabled  
to furvey thofe of fculpture, which  
had been alfo fpared by the deftruc-  
tive hand of time, to corroborate  
*historic testimony*. Under thefe cir-  
cumftances, he would enlarge his  
credence to its defcription; and  
would be induced to give *some* faith  
to thofe things which he had pre-  
viously imputed to HYPERBOLE or  
FICTION. He would infer, that in  
pro-



proportion as commerce and manufactures had extended their benign effects among mankind, the employment of time became more precious, and less at the disposal of PRINCES and of EMPERORS,—that EGYPTIAN PYRAMIDS, ROMAN AMPHITHEATRES, and other PRODIGIES OF HUMAN LABOUR have been, for the most part, THE TAX OF TYRANNY upon the leisure of an idle MULTITUDE;—and that the present age excels more in the elegant and convenient, than in the magnificent and useless pursuits of life.

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For a farther illustration of this fact, a contemplative being will be impatient to visit NAPLES, and its vicinage. He will burn with desire to behold a city preserved seventeen hundred years by *those very ashes*, which destroyed its inhabitants. He will see in POMPEII a perfect street, houses, and shops.\* He will remark

ancient

\* POMPEII is about six or seven miles distant from PORTICI. The way to it shews such volcanic afflictions, as prepare the mind for the fatal scene to which it directs. This unfortunate place, though at a great distance from VESUVIUS, was certainly very suddenly buried by it, in the reign of TITUS. It is very evident, that HERCULANEUM, and POMPEII, were not ruined in the same manner; for the destruction of the *latter* was by a rain of ashes from the mountain, so violent on all sides, that an escape from the calamity must have been impossible. The *ashes* are all small; and it is wonderful with

what

ancient contrivances for agriculture,  
and all the domestic purposes of life :

G 2

by

what facility they may be removed, notwithstanding the small progress hitherto made.

On entering the city, the first object is a pretty square, with *arcades*, after the present manner of ITALY. This was, as it is imagined, the quarter of the soldiers; numbers of military weapons being found here.

A narrow, but long street, with several shops on each side, is now perfectly cleansed from its rubbish, and in good preservation. Each house has a court. In some of them are paintings *al fresco* principally in *chiaro scuro*; and their colours not in the least injured by time. The few colours which the Ancients knew were extracted only from minerals, and this may be a sufficient reason for their freshness. The street is paved with irregular stones of a foot and half, or two feet long, like the APPIAN way.

In discovering this city, it was at first doubted, whether it were *actually* POMPEII; but the name inscribed over the gate-way put it beyond all doubt. The skele-

tons

by these, he will compare the advantages of modern improvements, and

CON-

tions found were innumerable. It is said, that many had spades in their hands, endeavouring, probably at first, to clear away the torrent of ashes, with which they were deluged. Indeed the satisfaction, which is felt at the view of ancient habitations, is much allayed by inevitable reflexions *on this frightful scene of desolation*, though at the distance of so many centuries.

An ancient VILLA is also seen entire at a little distance from POMPEII. The house is really elegant and spacious; but only two stories high. The pavement of the chambers is composed of tessellated marble; and, when polished, displays the design perfectly well. There is some at the Museum of PORTICI, brought from this place; which the eye would really mistake for painting. Under the house, is a fine triangular cellar, of which each part is one hundred feet long, well filled with *ampboræ*. The skeletons of twenty-nine persons were found here, supposed to have fled to it for safety. Each house is filled with ashes: they have almost penetrated through every crevice; and it is incredible, how such a volume of them could have been thrown out by VESUVIUS, with sufficient force to have reached so far.

We

confess, with exultation, their superiority. Thus, his curiosity is directed to a proper channel; and his mind becomes the receptacle of general information, and of useful reflection.

What an immense distance is there between such a man as this, and a

G 3

cha-

We can easily account for the destruction of HERCULANEUM, as the *lava* flowing from VESUVIUS was directed to that spot by the declivity of the mountain. The situation of HERCULANEUM is under the village of PORTICI, so that the restoration of the former place would necessarily prove the destruction of the latter, without considering the difficulty of working through the *lava*, which is as hard, and harder than *marble itself*. The theatre of HERCULANEUM is however completely cleared; but for its accommodation or structure, is nothing extraordinary. Bones and skulls were found here in quantities, mixed and consolidated with the *lava*.—[*Extract of a letter from the Author, to a Friend, written on the spot.*]

character not unfrequent to our notice in ENGLAND, who, with a *rudis indigestaque moles* of Latin and Greek, struts majestically thro' the world as A SCHOLAR and A LEARNED MAN! Ask him his opinion, he will tell you what PLATO, PLUTARCH, CICERO, and SENECA have said in prose; or HOMER, ANACREON, VIRGIL, and HORACE, have said in verse, upon the subject in question. The fact is, that he has scarcely given freedom to his thoughts; and, (though his head be a chronicle of ancient quotations) his judgment has been seldom



dom fatigued by any exertions of its own.

Classical learning, it is true, is not so general on the Continent, as with us; nor are the advantages or disadvantages resulting from it so conspicuous: those, who pursue it in ITALY or FRANCE, use it as the *means* rather than the *end*; but we have instances in this kingdom of opposite characters.

But to return to the environs of POMPEII. 'Tis *here*, that NATURE operates *her seeming Miracles*. 'Tis *here*, we witness the full extent of  
her

her variety—HER VOLCANIC PHENOMENA, and THE WHOLE TRAIN OF HER CHYMICAL PROCESSES,—HER DEVASTATIONS and HER FERTILIZATIONS. 'Tis *here* we view mountains cleft afunder by her convulsions, and barren lavas acquire a fresh soil by her genial influence; and from this place, the wondering eye takes in its comprehensive range, the glittering spires of NAPLES, with its capacious bay, and shipping. Contrasted objects of horror and delight take joint possession of the mind, in contemplating this multiform scene. —We view, in the midst of it, a city  
 built

built on the center of subterraneous fires, which has escaped for so many centuries the surrounding destruction; and we find the fearless inhabitants scarcely noticing the terrific spectacle of the contiguous volcano.

'Tis around this place, in a particular manner, that we feel the force of old MONTAIGNE'S axiom "*que l'usage nous dérobe le vrai visage des choses,*" for amidst this diversified appearance of the exuberant bounty, and awful paroxysms of nature, the PEASANT builds his HUT, plants his VINEYARD, is endowed by Providence

vidence with a happy insensibility to the dangers which may await him; and, even, after having participated in some of these local calamities, with a happy oblivion, repairs them, like the INSECT which spins anew its web in the identical spot of its RUINS.

The dispensations of heaven are impartial; and its blessings and scourges are alternately distributed throughout the creation, to awaken the thoughts of torpid man. Here, indeed, the stranger alone meditates and moralizes; for *anticipation* and *retrospection* are little known to the  
na-

native : When he experiences the disaster, he deplores his fate ; and his fears cease with his sufferings.

This may be, in some measure, imputed to his seeing *his* lot, the lot of all his neighbours ; and, though he should hear of a different country not subject to these sudden disorders, it would be with difficulty, that he could be persuaded to remove from the richly-vegetative vicinity of Vesuvian smoke.

Good husbandry is certainly in a very unimproved state throughout  
all

all ITALY, and particularly in the part of it we have just described.— Indeed, man is by nature indolent; and unless some strong necessity urges him to the use of those powers, which were originally bestowed upon him; he remains A CARELESS OBSERVER, AND A SUPINE PARTAKER of his CREATOR's bounty.

Where the air is occasionally so charged with sulphureous, nitrous, and bituminous particles, there can be no need of giving the soil a manure of lime, marl, or dung; and it is scarcely possible to drain the earth  
of



of its prolific qualities, by the most impoverishing crops, which can be taken from it. The harvest, it is true, fails more frequently in ITALY, and particularly in the Neapolitan territories, than with us ; but the ordinary cause of this misfortune, seems to be a long continued drought, which is very rare in ENGLAND. The abundant produce, however, of what the inhabitants term only a moderate *racolta*, amply compensate for a bad year.

An author, eminent for several agricultural tracts, seems to consider

ITALY

ITALY, as a country from whence might be drawn many improvements on the irrigation of lands. It is very probable, that an accurate and judicious examination of a part of the world, so well supplied with water by rivers, and by streams issuing from its mountains, would be beneficial. The advantages resulting from it, are there almost always accidental ; and it is much to be desired, that an observer, with the qualification of that ingenious gentleman, would give it the necessary attention. His remarks upon the these local and fortuitous objects in ITALY, might be of certain

tain and permanent service to our meadow-grounds in ENGLAND.

There can be few other things in Italian husbandry, worth the notice of an English farmer. The curious traveller will almost wonder how the cities can be supplied with necessaries, from the depopulation of the country, and he will often travel miles without seeing a cottage ! That respectable body of people, whom we term *yeomanry* in ENGLAND, have no existence in ITALY ; and such *dis-  
esteem* is attached to the class denominated PAESANI, that it is an insuperable

perable obstacle to agricultural improvement.

A rich Italian is generally attached to show; and VANITY seldom relishes RURAL SOLITUDE. This indeed naturally leads us to notice, that the English temper is peculiarly adapted to this science. An Englishman gives the fullest attention to different theories, and examines closely the principles upon which they are founded. He calculates the possible benefit, which may accrue to him from experiment, and often finds himself amply repaid for his trouble,

by

by his success. To this, we may attribute the vast acquisitions of knowledge, which husbandry has gained within some few years past in ENGLAND, and from it, proceeds an additional source of our national prosperity.

The kingdom is finely calculated for these advantages, by the attractive charms of its country, and the many amusements it affords. Where else can we see such a delightful verdure? Where can we enjoy a greater variety of hill and vale, park and grove, meadow and corn-field, with

H fuch

such an infinite number of enchanting views, as the eye can never be sated with surveying? In vain we hear the listless hypochondriac complaining of the inconstancy of our weather, and of the humidity of our atmosphere; 'tis to these very blessings, we owe the fertility of our soil, and the smiling face of nature throughout our Island. And ITALY herself, notwithstanding the many Elysian spots she must be allowed to contain, is certainly far excelled by ENGLAND in rural beauty, whether we speak of

“ Meadows



“ Meadows trim with daisies pied,  
 “ Shallow brooks and rivers wide :  
 “ While the plowman near at hand  
 “ Whistles o’er the furrowed land ;  
 “ And the milk-maid singeth blithe,  
 “ And the mower whets his scythe.

—“ *Or mark the wild and heathy scene*  
 “ With some sad ruin midst its dreary dells ;”

“ *Or find the HUT that from the mountain’s*  
 side

“ Views wilds and swelling floods,’  
 “ And Hamlets brown, and dim-discover’d  
 “ spires, ‘  
 “ And hears their simple bell.

The animated part of this rich  
 scenery, is almost peculiar to this

kingdom ; and the content, and rosy health glowing in the cheeks of its rustic inhabitants, form a splendid contrast to the meagre, livid, and dispirited peasants of ITALY.

The subject of Agriculture naturally leads us to mention the exquisite taste of the English, in what is commonly called *laying out grounds*. They have a characteristic fancy in embellishing nature ; but not by the cold symmetry of straight lines and circles invariably reflected, nor by the foliage of trees ridiculously representing every *created beast*, and every

every *imagined monster*. Of all the European nations, and indeed of all the world, (if we except the Chinese) they were the first, who felt that the EYE of TASTE abhors constraint,—that it delights in those spiral walks, which discover at each step fresh objects of vivid green peeping through the dark and venerable oak; or of distant hills irregularly tinted by a confusion of wild and cultivated beauties.

It may seem extraordinary, that the Italians are so destitute of this taste, to those who have seen *some* of

of the masterly sketches of SALVATOR ROSA; and it would be reasonable to presume, that his fine and spirited compositions would have abundantly transfused it throughout ITALY; but it is in ENGLAND where the GENIUS of MAN

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“ Swells the rising hills,  
“ And scoops the dales to NATURE’s finest  
forms;

And it is in ENGLAND *alone*, where ART so happily produces the glassy lake, the bursting torrent, the interrupting rocks, and all the picturesque varieties of the globe.

The

The science of gardening is also at the lowest ebb in ITALY. They have scarcely the common knowledge of pruning, and grafting trees; and all their esculent vegetables are the spontaneous productions of nature. —Melons, and those choice fruits, which require the utmost attention in ENGLAND, grow there neglected; and degenerate so much for want of care, that among fifty of the former, it will sometimes be difficult to find one of a tolerable flavour. It is said, that water melons, roasted chestnuts, and a few other fruits constitute the principal food of the lower classes

classes in some parts of ITALY, and particularly at NAPLES, among those miserable beings, who are named LAZZARONI; and who are computed to amount alone to thirty thousand souls.

Nothing can be more true, than that the human species increase in proportion to their *actual* means of subsistence; and the Italian territories furnish ample proofs of it.— To the facility, with which nature may be here sustained, and to the little that it here requires, we may attribute the vast population of

NAPLES,

NAPLES, and indeed that of *ancient Italy*. If all the waste lands of that country were in perfect culture, it is highly probable that they would maintain four times the number of their present inhabitants.

The manner, in which these live, conduces essentially to their longevity; and, though they do not use much, or violent exercise, the profuse perspiration, which the heat of their climate necessarily promotes, may be considered as the reason, that so few chronic complaints are known among them. The excessive thirst  
which



which this excites, is quickly allayed by the refreshing juices of acid fruits, so admirably adapted by Providence to their soil ; and they afford no small preservative against those putrid disorders which are so destructive in warm climates.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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